

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /073 W

----- 056025

R 091435Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4546

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, US

SUBJECT: MORE FROM MELVIN LAIRD

REF: CAPE TOWN 373 AND STATE 74134

1. IN CAPE TOWN, FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY LAIRD TOLD SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS APRIL 8 THAT HE HAS CONFERRED WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, CHIEFS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE, STATE PRESIDENT DIEDERICH, MINFINANCE HORWOOD, MINECONOMIC AFFAIRS HEUNIS, AND PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADER EGLIN.

2. LAIRD SAID U.S. STOOD BY U.N. ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, BUT FACT THAT SOUTH AFRICA WAS WORKING FOR DIALOGUE WITH REST OF AFRICA WAS RECOGNIZED IN U.S. AND COULD NOT "HELP BUT HAVE AN EFFECT ON PUBLIC OPINION IN THE UNITED

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STATES." HE SAID HE WAS SPEAKING AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN

WHOSE VIEWS IN NO WAY REPRESENTED THOSE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT, BUT ADDED HE WAS "A VERY GOOD FRIEND OF PRESIDENT FORD." (FYI: DURING PRIVATE LUNCHEON HOSTED BY SAG SECRETARY OF COMMERCE APRIL 7 WITH SOME PROMINENT SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSMEN AND SEVERAL TOP-LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS, AND ATTENDED BY CONGEN OFFICER, LAIRD STATED THAT AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN HE HAD A RIGHT TO EXPRESS HIS OPINIONS. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS MOVING AHEAD RAPIDLY IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND ADDED THAT THIS FORWARD MOVEMENT IS RECOGNIZED AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, DESPITE VIEWS OF STATE DEPARTMENT. END FYI.)

3. AT HIS PRESS INTERVIEW, LAIRD SAID HE HAD MET THE NINE (SIC) DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSMEN WHO WERE VISITING SOUTHERN AFRICA AND HAD SEEN REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THEY WOULD PRESENT TO SECRETARY OF STATE AND TO PRESIDENT. RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD DEAL WITH INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASPECT AND IMPORTANCE OF CAPE SEA ROUTE. LAIRD SAID THAT AS FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HE UNDERSTOOD "THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THIS ROUTE."

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS HAD NO PREVIOUS INKLING OF REPORT BY CONGRESSMEN. (LAIRD PRESUMABLY WAS REFERRING TO DENT, ICHORD AND RUNNELS, BUT POSSIBLY COULD ALSO-- IF HE USED THE NUMBER NINE AS REPORTED IN PRESS--HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO CODEL LED BY REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN BOB WILSON WHICH VISITED SOUTH AFRICA IN JANUARY.) FROM COMMENTS MADE BY DENT AND THE OTHERS, WE ASSUME ANY SUCH REPORT WOULD STRESS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO U.S. AND RECOMMEND CLOSER OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. DESPITE THE CAREFUL EMPHASIS ON HIS STATUS AS PRIVATE CITIZEN, LAIRD'S REFERENCE TO CONGRESSMEN'S INTENT TO REPORT TO PRESIDENT AND HIS REMARK ABOUT BEING CLOSE FRIEND OF PRESIDENT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CAUSE MANY SOUTH AFRICANS TO INFER THAT STRONG PRESSURE IS BUILDING UP FOR WHITE HOUSE TO MAKE MAJOR CHANGES IN U.S. POLICY ON SOUTH AFRICA. EDMONDSON

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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**Film Number:** D750123-0570  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, SF, US, (LAIRD, MELVIN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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